

April 23, 2015

Honorable Richard J. Sullivan
United States District Judge

Re: Eric Saldarriaga

Dear Honorable Judge Sullivan:

My name is Alejandro Fernandez. I am an Assistant Principal with the New York City Department of Education and have been employed with the NYCDOE for the past twenty-three years. I met Eric Saldarriaga in 1983 when he was ten years old and I was a member of a youth group sponsored by Most Precious Blood Roman Catholic Church in Astoria, Queens. I was friends with his older brother, German Saldarriaga. We all grew up together and have remained close friends for the past thirty-two years.

I have seen Eric develop into a responsible, dependable man. As a young man, Eric was tasked with the challenge of taking care of his mother and grandmother after his parents' divorce. He never complained about the challenges, both financial and emotional. He just worked harder and provided for his family. After high school, Eric worked as a mechanic as well as holding down a job in Macy's. Through hard work and perseverance, he began working as a private investigator. As a result of his tenacity and his efforts, he has been able to support his wife, two children, mother, and grandmother. Not only is he a devoted son, husband, and father, but he is the cornerstone of his family. His family means the world to him and they depend on him.

Eric has proven to be a very good friend. He is dependable and of sound moral character. Eric has always wanted to help the needy, and continues to want to make the world a better place. He never shies away from tackling injustice. He is also human and as such, made a mistake. Although, I am not privy to the charges, I know Eric, and I can attest to his moral character and his sense of right and wrong. He is always on the side of the victim and has always done his best to remedy any injustice. I plead that you take my testimony about Eric's character into consideration when he is sentenced before your court. I also plead that you take into consideration Eric's declining health. In recent years, he has suffered from heart troubles, depression, and a fall that resulted in a brain injury. This brain injury still continues to affect his daily life. If he is incarcerated, I fear that his health will deteriorate even further.

I also plead that you take into consideration that Eric is the financial and emotional support for his wife, sons, mother, and grandmother. He is a dedicated father who donates his time and money to his sons' school. He is extremely involved in their lives and is often their primary caregiver when they are not in school. His boys are his world and he is their hero. I fear that irreparable harm will be done to these two precious, impressionable young boys if their father were sentenced to any jail time.

In the past thirty-two years, I have witnessed Eric experience good times and bad times, sad times and happy times. However, in the past months, Eric has been very different. I am extremely concerned about him and his well-being. Eric has suffered greatly for his error. Jail time would only serve to break him and break the hearts of his family members, including his beloved sons. I believe that he has learned a valuable lesson and that he will never again be involved in any activity that violates the law. I plead for the court to have mercy and not sentence Eric to any jail time.

I thank you for your consideration. I pray that my dear friend is allowed to return to his family and continue to be a positive force in his sons' lives.

Respectfully,



Alejandro Fernandez

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